

Proclamation 9254 of April 10, 2015

Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 2015

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, delegates from countries throughout the Western Hemisphere came together to establish the International Union of American Republics, the forerunner to what is today the oldest regional international organization in the world: the Organization of American States. In the years since, our nations have collaborated to address regional challenges and improve the lives of people across the Americas. On Pan American Day and during Pan American Week, we reaffirm our hemisphere's enduring friendship, and we recommit to working as equal partners to support robust civil societies and expand opportunity.

The United States and our regional neighbors are bound by our mutual desire for peace and stability, and the common yearning of all our peoples—to build a better life for themselves and their families. We share vibrant people-to-people connections and extensive economic links. These ties are vital to our security and prosperity, and when we work together to strengthen them, we help ensure a brighter future for the next generation.

My Administration is dedicated to joining with our Pan American partners to promote and protect human rights, open markets, expand fair trade, and advance the values of democracy and freedom. Last December, we began a new chapter in this commitment. In the most significant changes to our policy in more than 50 years, the United States is beginning to normalize our relations with Cuba. As we extend a hand of friendship to the Cuban people, we have the potential to lift up a nation and end a legacy of mistrust in our hemisphere.

We continue to expand trade among the nations of the Americas because we know when we allow businesses to grow their markets it extends opportunity to a wider circle of people. We are fostering small business connections throughout the Americas and bolstering women-owned and managed enterprises. Through the *100,000 Strong in the Americas* initiative, the United States is striving to increase educational exchanges that open doors to new markets, innovative research, and region-wide prosperity. And as our nations face common energy and environmental concerns, my Administration is working with leaders and experts from the region to ensure every person in the Western Hemisphere will have access to the electricity they need at a price they can afford—in a manner that is socially responsible and environmentally beneficial.

As we head into this week, I will attend the Summit of the Americas in Panama. As leaders from across the Pan American community come together, we will continue our work to address the shared challenges our countries face today. When our people—our leaders, our civil society members, and all the sons and daughters of the Americas—join in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect, we can build a future of greater peace, security, and possibility for every person who calls the Americas home.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and

Proc. 9255

Title 3—The President

the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 14, 2015, as Pan American Day and April 12 through April 18, 2015, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of the other areas under the flag of the United States of America to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9255 of April 13, 2015

National Equal Pay Day, 2015

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In the United States, the promise of opportunity is built on the idea that everyone who works hard should have the chance to get ahead. This creed is at the core of our democracy, and it is central to our belief that America does best when all people are able to share in our Nation's prosperity and contribute to our success. Yet every day, countless women perform the same work as their male colleagues only to earn less than their fair share. On National Equal Pay Day, we mark how far into the new year women would have to work just to earn the same as men did in the previous year, and we renew our efforts to end this injustice.

On average, full-time working women earn 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, and women of color face an even greater disparity. This wage gap puts women at a career-long disadvantage, and it harms families, communities, and our entire economy. Today, in more than half of all households, women are breadwinners—49 million children depend on women's salaries. But our economy and our policies have not caught up to this reality. When women experience pay discrimination it limits their future, and it also hurts the people they provide for. It means less for their families' everyday needs, for investments in their children's futures, and for their own retirements. These effects reduce our shared prosperity and restrict our Nation's economic growth. Wage inequality affects us all, and we each must do more to make certain that women are full and equal participants in our economy.

When we take action to help women succeed, we help America succeed, and my Administration is committed to ensuring women have every opportunity to reach their fullest potential. The first bill I signed as President was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and the following year—to crack down on violations of equal pay laws—I created the National Equal Pay Task Force, which to date has helped women recover millions of dollars in lost wages. If workers do not know they are underpaid, they cannot challenge the inequality; that is why we are going to require Federal contractors to submit data on employee compensation, including data by sex and race,